

TAXING INTERNET SHOPPING

Online sales ruling to boost counties and LI business

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A major Supreme Court decision Thursday that allows states to force online shoppers to pay sales tax will make it easier for small businesses on Long Island to compete with online retailers, local officials and business groups said.

Nassau County could stand to collect an estimated \$50 million to \$100 million in sales tax on online transactions, according to a spokesman for County Executive Laura Curran, who backed earlier efforts by Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo to expand online sales tax collections in the state.

A spokesman for Suffolk County said that the estimates for sales tax revenue would be similar.

The 5-4 ruling in *South Dakota v. Wayfair* is a win for states, which said they were losing out on billions of tax dollars annually under two decades-old Supreme Court decisions that restricted online sales tax collection. The high court ruled Thursday to overturn those rulings.

"This decision is a huge win for the brick-and-mortar retailers on Long Island and could potentially be a windfall for local municipalities in regards to sales tax revenue," said Kyle Strober, executive director of



Supreme Court ruling makes online shopping subject to the same local sales tax as small businesses.

the Association for a Better Long Island, a real estate developers' lobbying group that counts many of the region's retail landlords as members.

Curran said that the ruling "has put the ability to collect sales tax from internet sales in the hands of the state and gives a tremendous boost of confidence to local businesses that struggle to compete with internet commerce."

In a statement, County Execu-

tive Steve Bellone called the decision "a major victory for small businesses and county governments."

Kevin Law, president of the Long Island Association, the region's largest business group, said the federal ruling should benefit small businesses who have been at a "competitive disadvantage" on the issue of sales tax, but for local shoppers "who were enjoying some tax free online purchases, those

days appear to be numbered."

Officials with the state's Department of Taxation and Finance are still reviewing the court decision, James Gazzale, public information officer for the department wrote in an email. Earlier this year, a proposal by the governor to expand online sales tax collection was criticized by Senate Republicans and did not make it into the state's budget.

The cases the court over-

turned said that if a business was shipping a product to a state where it didn't have a physical presence, such as a warehouse or office, the business didn't have to collect the state's sales tax. Customers were generally supposed to pay the tax to the state themselves if they didn't get charged it, but the vast majority did not.

Justice Anthony Kennedy wrote that the previous decisions were flawed.

"Each year the physical presence rule becomes further removed from economic reality and results in significant revenue losses to the States. These critiques underscore that the physical presence rule, both as first formulated and as applied today, is an incorrect interpretation of the Commerce Clause," he wrote.

Amazon.com, with its network of warehouses, collects sales tax in every state that charges it. But third-party sellers who use the site to sell goods don't have to.

In the case before the court, South Dakota wanted out-of-state retailers to begin collecting the tax and sued several of them: Overstock.com, electronics retailer Newegg and home goods company Wayfair.

The Trump administration had urged the justices to side with South Dakota, and in a tweet following the decision, President Donald Trump wrote that the ruling was a "Great victory for consumers and retailers."

With Tory N. Parrish and AP

'Roseanne' to spin off without her

LOS ANGELES — ABC, which canceled its "Roseanne" revival over its star's racist tweet, said Thursday it will air a Conner family sitcom minus Roseanne Barr this fall.

ABC ordered 10 episodes of the spinoff after Barr agreed to forgo any creative or financial participation in it, which the network had said was a condition of such a series.

In a statement issued by the show's producer, Barr said she agreed to the settlement to save the jobs of 200 cast and crew

members idled by last month's cancellation.

"I regret the circumstances that have caused me to be removed from 'Roseanne,' she said, adding, "I wish the best for everyone involved."

The revival of the hit 1988-97 sitcom "Roseanne" was swiftly axed by ABC last month after Barr posted a tweet likening former Obama adviser Valerie Jarrett to a product of the Muslim Brotherhood and "Planet of the Apes."

Tom Werner, executive pro-

ducer of the original series and the revival, said in the statement that he was grateful to reach the deal.

ABC said the new series, with "The Conners" as its working title, will star John Goodman, Laurie Metcalf, Sara Gilbert and other "Roseanne" cast members.

How Barr's character, the family matriarch, will be erased was left unexplained for now. The spinoff will continue to portray contemporary issues that are as relevant today as they were 30 years ago," ABC said. — AP



Sara Gilbert, left, and Roseanne Barr in a scene from "Roseanne."